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TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SP](#) [UK](#) [GR](#) [NO](#) [EU](#)  
SUBJECT: LEFT-LEANING EUROPEAN LEADERS RALLY BEHIND GORDON  
BROWN

REF: LONDON 313

Classified By: Economic Counselor Kathleen Doherty for reasons 1.4 (b),  
(d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. An international conference on jobs had the feel of a campaign rally for Prime Minister Brown, with several left-leaning European leaders strongly praising Brown for rescuing the world from the economic crisis. The theme of the February 19 conference held in London by Progressive Policy Network, a UK-based left-of-center thinktank, was to discuss a socially progressive approach to generate jobs and economic growth; the prime ministers of Greece, Spain, and Norway were among the high-level participants. Brown opened the conference with an uncharacteristically impassioned and emotive speech, which focused predominantly on the Labour Party's plans to address Britain's economic woes and the continued need for concerted global action. Despite the prominent list of speakers, the event was unnoticed by the UK media. End Summary.

#### UK and European Political Heavyweights at Conference

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¶2. (SBU) Progressive Policy Network, an international left-of-center thinktank, sponsored an international "Progressive Governance Conference" on February 19 in London. The conference's theme was "Jobs, industry and opportunity: Growth strategies after the crisis", and featured many important British and European leaders such as Gordon Brown; UK Foreign Secretary David Milliband; UK Business Secretary Lord Peter Mandelson; the Greek, Spanish and Norwegian prime ministers; WTO director-general Pascal Lamy among others. The conference focused on advancing an international progressive agenda to tackle economic issues throughout Europe. The political leaders engaged the audience on issues related to a more responsible international financial regulatory system, further regional (EU) and global integration in terms of trade and market regulation, a strong role for government to stimulate job growth and others.

#### Gordon Brown Opens with "Campaign Speech"

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¶3. (SBU) Gordon Brown's opening remarks hit on several key Labour party policies, sounding more like a campaign speech aimed squarely at the upcoming British elections than a speech for a progressive internationalist conference. Aside from calls for a "world constitution" for the global financial economy and general support for more global coordination at the G8 and G20 level, Brown's speech focused on Labour party policies to address domestic economic troubles. Echoing themes from Labour's September 2009 conference, Brown outlined his economic agenda: 1) financial sector reform; 2) sustained economic recovery; 3) economic growth based on modern, low-carbon industrial investments; and 4) guaranteeing social mobility. Brown's speech was unusually emotive, spurring a generally positive reaction

from the audience. Between sessions, several participants commented on their surprise at such an impassioned speech by the normally reserved prime minister.

#### European Leaders Show Support for Gordon Brown

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¶4. (SBU) The three visiting prime ministers from Spain, Greece and Norway all offered effusive praise for Gordon Brown in their remarks. Each PM credited Gordon Brown with mobilizing a globally-concerted fiscal response to avert a much deeper economic crisis in late 2008/2009. Spanish PM Jose Luis Zapatero, who also attended the 2009 Labour Party conference, predicted that economists thirty years from now would single out Gordon Brown as the person who "saved the world from the first global financial crisis". Norwegian PM Jens Stoltenberg praised Brown's "initiative" to get the world's governments to take fiscal action at the height of the crisis. The newly elected Greek PM George Papandreou said Brown "gets credit" for convincing the world to increase fiscal spending.

¶5. (C/NF) Comment. Brown no doubt sees the effusive European praise as validation of his economic policies and his leadership both globally and within the EU. However, his European colleagues' support went largely unnoticed in the UK press, and will likely have no impact on Labour's standing in the polls (reftel). With Brown's government fast approaching an election where a Labour victory is far from certain, the fact that Brown may not be on the other side of the negotiating table in a few months time also won't be lost on European leaders. End comment.

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